1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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County Clare

ass-carts among the poultry sellers or with the pigs, but seldom in the corn or cattle markets.

Another modern vehicle has worked its way into farm life. The bicycle is used by all ages and both sexes. But in poorer districts it is principally used by adult men, especially among the smaller farmers. Children go on foot. The bicycle is an informal and individual means of conveyance, ideal for visiting, for the pursuits and pleasures of young men and women, and for quick trips to the local crossroad center.

Finally, the country people travel a great deal on foot. At work one travels nearly always on foot. Distances are short, and the vehicles one has are needed for carrying. On Sunday most people walk to mass, even where it means a long walk over the fields. In any procession of country life the majority of persons taking part are always afoot. In running petty errands to "friends," neighbors, and the local shop one goes on foot. Habit wears many paths across the fields in many directions. It makes one very expert at avoiding hazards of mud and wet. But nearly all foot journeys find the road soon or late.

To complete the picture of rural travel, one must add perforce two more vehicles. One is very new and just beginning to make its influence felt, though only on the main roads between the large cities and towns. This is the motor bus. Today a few persons have begun to travel beyond the market towns to the cities for their more important business, and in the movement lies much of one side of the picture of the decline of the middle-sized towns in rural Ireland. The other and last means of transport is the horse. Only adults among the country people ever ride him, either for sport or for transport. The horse is first a work animal, then a sporting beast. In either case he is the special care and interest of the adult man.

The methods of transport in the countryside are related

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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521 is not only because one of the listeners was the
888 anthropologist 'looking for old custom'. For, where
561 descent is a critical nexus of habitual relationship and old age the most honoured state, the past cannot fail to be the focus of interest.

Thus the older men and women are very partial to the things of their own age. And the young people are, in part, swept along with them. The 'old times' are a very ready topic among the country-people. Many a time an old person will be got to tell of them; he or she takes little warming to the task. They were the hard times, even bad times, of famine and death but the speakers throw a glow of courage and glamour round them. There were few tools, no draft-animals, no shoes, none of the amenities of present existence. The listeners murmur phrases of commiseration and shake their heads in pity. "Weren't they the bad old times?" and "Wasn't it hard the work they had to do in the old days?" they ask one another. But there is a tinge of pride in their voices, in the manner of tellers and listeners alike.

For remembered necessities, in the eyes of the old people who tell the tale, are now feats of endurance to which the new generation could never aspire. That is the point for those who tell and those who listen. Where could you get a young
● [481] man today to walk from Corofin to Ballinasloe, walk in his bare feet the forty miles and back over the stony roads? Where is the woman today who

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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a landmark notable enough for many a legend, but the tales of it that best survive are those that relate it to the life of the present and express in the fairy-belief its danger to human life and property. "There's somebody lost," I was told, "off every bit of the cliffs. In the old days the men used to go down often [for wood and salvage]. They used to go down on their own ropes. . . . There was a fellow over in Liscannor who would go down at any time of day or night. He used to go down for lost sheep or lambs. One day a child fell off Aillena-searrach and he went down for the body . . . but when he came up he said he'd never go down again because every rock down below was covered with people sitting on it. People out of the sea they were. . . . Two little girls were lost looking for flowers the fairies put there to grow. The flowers aren't there at all, but are put there just to draw people over the cliffs."

Thus belief and rite in folklore conspire to a common end. They provide the countryman with a world-view in which his regard for things and scenes and events is charged with the emotional forces necessary in his social life.

But as we have seen again and again throughout our whole discussion, the sentiments he holds are organized first and foremost round his fellows: the members of his family, household, kindred, and the community. It is toward them that his habit is fashioned and in his relation to them that his social

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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known to be of mediæval descent. The method of manufacture is shown in Fig. 50, and the tying down of a hay pike in Fig. 51. Sugán was sometimes employed instead of wattle

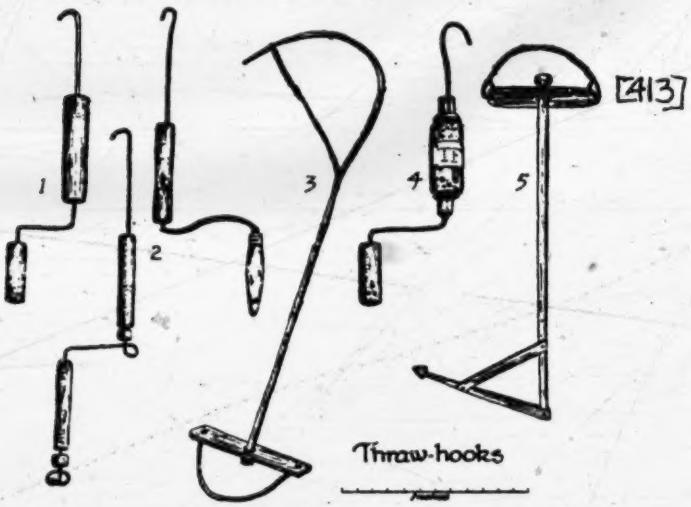

Fig. 78.

Sugán twisters 1. Co. Antrim. 2. Both Donegal. 3. Lecale, Down. 4. Leitrim. 5. Dingle, Kerry.

in the chimney canopies. It was used for the seats of chairs and for the clothes-line which stretched across the kitchen. A short length was sometimes worn as a girdle around a child's dress. From it were made tethering ropes, spancels and langles, traces and tail-ropes; and on the Donegal seaboard I have heard of cabbages being tethered "against the wind" by three hay-ropes! It is on record that the men of Mayo would descend the seacliffs suspended by a straw-rope.

A length of sugán is also the foundation course of many more complex objects of straw such as mats, mattresses, screens, beehives, nesting boxes, stools, arm-chairs, baskets and hampers. I illustrate (Fig. 79) one of the conical hen-nests which are hung on pegs in the kitchen: large

Fig. 79.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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cuttings a long-handled graip is sometimes used, and the smiths turned out special two-pronged pitching forks for the purpose (Fig. 66). If the peat is soft a long-handled shovel is employed instead. A barrow-load varies in capacity, for instance it is 10 turves in parts of Antrim and 14 in Armagh. The difference depends on the dimensions of the turves as well as the size of the barrow and the state of the bog surface: turves range from about 22 inches by 4 by 5 to 10 inches by 4 by 3, but they shrink considerably as they dry.

The turf barrow is a low solid-wheeled archaic-looking vehicle (Fig. 90) the details of its construction showing as many adaptations to local conditions and traditions as the slane itself. It is a compromise between two opposing needs—a large wheel for ease of pushing over the rough bog surface and a low chassis to facilitate loading and emptying, for the barrow is merely tilted on one side by the spreader, the turves slipping off and standing on end in serried rows to dry. The barrow must be as light as possible: hence no iron is used in its construction except for the axle-ends, and, perhaps, a light tyre for the solid wheel or "trundle." In soft bogs the trundle must be wide—as much as 5 inches—but three inches is more usual. Its diameter ranges from 12 to 18 inches. The legs of the barrow are always short and may be mere lugs, or they may be absent, in which case there must be some arrangement for enabling the handles to be gripped: they are either perforated or upturned (Fig. 90). An interesting variant which I have noticed around Athenry has the legs bent backwards in a curve to act as slides or runners. A curious adaptation to soft bogland is recorded a century ago from Co. Mayo, where both horses and men were "shod with boards" when working in the moss. Box-barrows are something used to transport dried turf, or a "kish" may be placed on the flat barrow. In Armagh "carrying baskets" are employed (Fig. 91).

Little can be said here about the methods adopted to dry the turf: the shapes and names of the various piles into which

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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developed from wicker constructions which, like the stone weirs, were once built by shore dwellers for their own needs. But weirs were not the only structure built in tidal waters. The inquiring visitor will observe along many stretches of coast straight lines of stones running out to sea which are the remains of little piers alongside which small boats could lie. Back of them beyond the reach of the tide there may be the ruins of a boat shelter which might never have been more than a rectangular pen of stone walls or earth banks. Such pens are still used to protect the curraghs of the west coast from the wind which is their worst enemy.[1] The vessels are in addition weighted down with stones (Fig. 75), and to this end the gunwales often project at the rear of the curraghs to give purchase for the boulders (Fig. 78).

On the lonely and now abandoned island of St. Kilda the portion which a woman took to her husband on marriage is said to have been 'a pound of horsehair to make a gin to catch fowls'.[2] Martin Martin in his account of the island also tells us that the 200 inhabitants yearly killed and preserved above 20,000 birds, and in addition prodigious numbers of seabirds' eggs were consumed. The killing of seabirds and the taking of eggs for export to England during the worst period of food shortage in the second world war brought about a temporary revival of old skills on many parts of the Irish coast. Down to times still remembered fowling was a seasonal activity on most of the islands where seabirds assemble to nest. Birds of the auk family were caught in horsehair 'dulls' (snares) pegged to the ground. For other birds such as rock pigeons the snares were baited. July was the busy month, and the birds not eaten in this 'hungry month' were salted down for the winter. On Rathlin Island the cliffs and sea-slopes were apportioned in strips and demarcated by spikes driven into the rocks. It is remembered that single men in search of eggs would let themselves alone down ropes attached to iron pins in the cliff edge. Traditions of other ways of catching the birds have been lost but one may be fairly sure that the various methods described by Martin Martin and more recently by Kenneth Williamson for the

[1] S. Piggott, *Antiquity*, 28 (1954), 19–24.
[2] Martin Martin, *The Western Isles*, 317.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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Faeroe Islands[1] were practised in a region which has so many culture parallels with the northern isles.

Down to recent times coast-dwellers also took their toll of seals and porpoises. 'We thought more of a seal in those days', wrote Thomas O'Crohan of the Blaskets, 'than of the very best pig.'[2] They were valued too for their skins, which as we have mentioned made covers for the curraghs and shoes for the rock-climbers. Seal hunting was dangerous work, sometimes involving swimming into the underwater caves where they breed. The seal catchers in County Cork wore 'bags quilted with charcoal' on their arms, for the animals let go their hold when they bit on the crunching charcoal.[3] In the Blaskets porpoises were slaughtered after being driven ashore by boats, and then 'everyone was crimson with the blood of the sea-pigs'.[4] The meat was salted down.

Crabs and lobsters, like so many other seafoods, are now neglected and even despised, though there are commercial fisheries in areas accessible to markets. Apart from creel fishing they were formerly taken from the rock holes where they lie, either by hand or with an iron hook. In County Kerry one man would hold another under the water with an oar while he searched the holes. The old-style pots or creels are circular, with a flat weighted bottom, sometimes hinged: the principle rods are of hazel or even whin, the woven sides of sally, laurel or heather stems. They vary in pattern from one district to another, as do the round-topped rectangular net-creels which have taken their place almost everywhere (Fig. 76). The lobstermen are a hardy breed, many of them having turned from long-line fishing, and they have kept up the feuds and rivalries to which the long-liners were addicted. In both types of fishing the search for bait is an exacting occupation. I illustrate a special fork used for digging lug worms, and also a mussel rake (Fig. 74).

If it is difficult to obtain information about the history of such tools and activities as these, which have been the concern

[1] K. Williamson, *The Atlantic Islands*, ch. 6. [Text continues on p. 232]
[2] T. O'Crohan, *The Islandman*, 99.
[3] E. Wakefield, *An Account of Ireland*, 2, 127.
[4] T. O'Crohan, op. cit., 12.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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confined to Co. Westmeath) is that the eel was undamaged and its skin could therefore be utilized. Apart from their use as thongs and flail-hangings eel-skins were worn as charms against rheumatic pains. Eel fat, too, is esteemed as a cure for rheumatism. The third type of eel-spear is quite different in form and methods of use. It is confined to Wexford Harbour and would appear to be a relic of Scandinavian influence in that half-foreign south-eastern corner of Ireland comprising the baronies of Bargy and Forth. It consists of two splayed prongs between which is ingeniously mounted a single barbed prong on to which the eel is guided by the outer members (Fig. 79). When the tide covers the mudflats the fisherman lies in a punt with his head over the prow, and with a spear in each hand propels the boat until he spies an eel in the mud, when his punting pole becomes a weapon. At low tide the eel fishers wear yard-long 'scooches' or mud-shoes, wooden boards turned up at the front like miniature skis. We note in passing that boards were formerly worn by both men and horses in working on soft bogs in Co. Mayo.[1]

The salmon spear or leister, being illegal, is normally a light three-pronged instrument, but large specimens weighing up to eight pounds and made after the fashion of the Westmeath eel-spears are found on the River Suir (Fig. 80). The fish were attracted at night by 'burning the river' with resinous splits of bog-fir or lumps of peat soaked in oil.

Riverine weirs of many kinds have been the privilege of religious houses and landed properties through the ages, and many examples specially designed for the capture of migratory fish, salmon and eels are maintained. There are traditions of temporary weirs of heather stems weighted down with stones, into which trout were driven to be extracted when the bundles of heather were pitched on to the bank. Gerard Boate describes the weirs in his day as consisting of 'big stones set close together from the one side of the river to the other, leaving only one hole . . . before which hole a basket being laid, they take therein a great quantity of fish'.[2] 'Fish baskets' and 'weels' are referred to in many ancient fishing grants, but I have not

[1] J. McParlan, *Mayo*, 94.
[2] Gerard Boate, *Ireland's Natural History*, 70.

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

Sex and Repression in an Irish Folk Community

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. Nudity is abhorred by the islanders, and the consequences of this attitude are numerous and significant for health and survival. Only infants have their entire bodies sponged once a week, on Saturday night; children, adolescents, and adults, on the same night, wash only their faces, necks, lower arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. Several times my wife and I created intense embarrassment by entering a room in which a man had just finished his weekly ablutions and was barefooted; once when this occurred, the man hurriedly pulled on his stockings and said with obvious relief, "Sure, it's good to get your clothes on again." Clothing always is changed in private, sometimes within the secrecy of the bedcovers, and it is usual for the islanders to sleep in their underclothes.

Despite the fact that Inis Beag men spend much of their time at sea in their canoes, as far as we could determine none of them can swim. Four rationales are given for this deficiency: the men are confident that nothing will happen to them, because they are excellent seamen and weather forecasters; a man who cannot swim will be more careful; it is best to drown immediately when a canoe capsizes far out in the ocean rather than swim futilely for minutes or even hours, thus prolonging the agony; and, finally, "When death is on a man, he can't be saved." The truth of the matter is that they have never dared to bare their bodies in order to learn the skill. Some women claim to have "bathed" at the back of the island during the heat of summer, but this means wading in small pools with skirts held knee-high, in complete privacy. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, particularly when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some homes, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this practice outdoors. My wife, who can perform Irish step-dances and sing many of the popular folk songs, was once requested to sing a seldom-heard American Western ballad; she chose "The Lavendar Cowboy," who "had only two hairs on his chest." The audience response was perfunctory and, needless to say, she never again was "called out" to sing that particular song.

The drowning of seamen, who might have saved themselves had they been able to swim, is not the only result of the sexual symbolism of nudity; men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might have meant baring their bodies to her, were beyond help when finally treated. While my wife and I were on the island, a nurse was assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness and